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under the possibility of being a hoodoo. When this reputation fastens itself to him, it works out his actual ruin. Even the most astute and worldly managers and the most sensible and sympathetic stars are affected by this groundless belief. I have known many cases of the most cruel persecution growing out of it, the utter defeat of the professional life of very talented persons. Long ago it should have been made a matter of libel. Indeed, one actor I knew seriously thought of taking the matter into the courts, his case being so unquestionably one of blackmail and persecution.

Another actor who had suffered untold misery and defeat through this malicious superstition was about to engage a skilful lawyer to take his case to court and have it decided once for all whether irresponsible

persons could jocularly play with his reputation, to his ruin. But his friends persuaded him that such a course would simply increase by a thousandfold the number of persons who would think of him as unlucky. Further, they urged, should the courts decide against him, not as being a hoodoo but as a man who had been so unsuccessful that a manager might reasonably avoid engaging him, he would be worse off than ever, and helplessly branded. So he decided to abandon his plan.

In such a matter there seems to be no way out of the unhappy dilemma except the general enlightening of people's minds with regard to what is called luck, and a larger appreciation of the fact that one can often change a hoodoo into a benediction by thinking rightly.

KEEPERS OF THE NEST

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so from the water's edge. Then he slunk off without pausing to digest the situation, the most dispirited fisher that had ever roamed the maskeeg.

The swan, catching a glimpse of his flight, filled the solitudes with the sonorous trumpeting of his triumph, and swam proudly back to the nest.

AS the five long weeks of brooding for the patient mother on her nest drew near an end, there came to the Barren Grounds a time of unprecedented drought. The innumerable streams that drained the soaking maskeeg ran shallow as they had never run before within the memory of the long lived swans. Under the long unshadowed warmth the lake shrank amazingly; and at last, to the vexation of the keepers of the nest, their islet ceased to be perfectly an islet. The group of tilted strata that formed it rose so far out of water that a thin topped ledge was revealed connecting them with the shore. It was no more than a series of widely separated and precarious stepping stones, awash in the smallest ripple; but it was enough to allow a sufficiently nimble wanderer to visit the islet dry shod. The swans eyed it with growing disquiet.

At last came the day when the patient brooder heard stirrings, and tappings, and thin little cries coming from the six precious eggs beneath her breast. From time to time she would lower her head among them to listen enraptured, or to answer with soft sounds of encouragement in her throat. Her mate drew closer to the nest, forgetting to eat, but never forgetting to keep a fiercely watchful eye upon the ledge connecting with the shore.

Soon one of the baby cygnets, having divided the shell into two halves by the ordered strokes of his sharp tipped bill, thrust up the top portion as if it had been a lid, and sprawled forth all wet against its mother's hot and naked breast. The mother pushed one half of the shell within the other, that they might take up less room, and then, a little later, threw them out of the nest lest they should get fitted on over the end of another egg and smother the occupant. Presently two more eggs hatched almost simultaneously. The ecstatic mother was now half standing in the nest to give the damp sprawlers room.

IT was at this time that the old gray lynx, prowling down nearer to the water's edge than was his wont, observed the stepping stones and decided to come over. He had wanted those great white birds for a long time.

Now, the most powerful of swans, in usual circumstances and conditions, is no match for the lynx, but helpless quarry, merely, for that fierce and powerful marauder. But often in defense of their young the wild creatures develop powers and heroisms undreamed of at other times. At such a period they become utterly reckless of odds; and such a temper may often accomplish the impossible. Moreover, it is one thing to hold a bridge and another to fight in the open.

There was no uncertainty in the minds of the two swans as to the deadliness of this peril. They knew all about lynxes. The mother bird stood up among her eggs and young, and stepped delicately from the nest, hissing and beating her wings. Both birds knew better than to attack this foe by water or by land. With screams of hate they rose laboriously into the air.

The lynx had reached the second stepping stone, a sharp and narrow one, and was balancing himself with the caution of a house cat afraid of wetting her feet, before taking the next leap. Just as he gathered himself to spring, the male swan struck him from his foothold. His fore paws, indeed, and his whiskered muzzle went into the water; but

his great hind claws, firm based for the spring, maintained their hold on the rock. Spitting harshly in his amazement, he clawed back to his position.

But in the next instant he was so ill advised and overconfident as to rise upon his hind legs, striking at his assailant in the hope of bringing him down. At the very moment when his balance was least secure the female, utterly reckless, launched her whole buffeting weight against him. Hurling him irresistibly from the ledge, she fell with him and upon him, driving him into the water.

For one bewildering second he clawed at her, ripping off the strong white feathers and inflicting cruel wounds on breast and thigh. But this was for a moment only. Daunted and choking, he loosed his grip in haste and pawed his way back to the surface. As he scrambled out upon the ledge both birds were at him again instantly; but he had not an ounce of fight left in him. He was not at all hungry, and he did not like swans, and he wanted to get off to some quiet, sunny place and dry himself! Spitting loudly, head hunched down between his shoulders, ears flat, and stub of a tail pressed tight between his furry buttocks, he fled ignominiously through a pandemonium of wings and beaks and screams.

When he was quite beyond their reach the two swans stretched themselves to their full height, spread their wings as wide as possible, and trumpeted a raucous warning to all trespassers. Then they hurried back to the nest which they knew so well how to guard. The female, apparently unconscious of her wounds, resumed eagerly her brooding, with soft murmurs to the hatching young; while the male, as calm as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened or was ever likely to happen, set himself to preening the ruffled snow of his plumage.

CONCERNING SMOKING

IN this day smoking is well nigh universal. It is common for men to smoke in the presence of women and in the house, at their pleasure. Often the women too smoke. Yet such freedom in the practice is wholly the growth of a single generation. Smoking in the streets was never indulged in by gentlemen of London until introduced by officers returning from the Crimea. White's Club, which was the inner shrine of elegance in the English metropolis, had no smoking room until 1845, and until as late as 1881 anyone who wished to enjoy a cigar in Brook's was forced to climb to the attic.

The same lack of license prevailed in private houses. It was not unusual to see a party of men, after dinner of a winter's night, scurrying through the snow slush of a court in order to enjoy in the harness room the privilege of smoking denied them in any part of their host's mansion. Some entertainers, of broader charity, permitted their guests to light their cigars in the servants' hall.

Queen Victoria until the very last refused permission to any guest to smoke in the privacy of his chamber in her palace. It is related of the late Bishop Brooks that, after several reprimands given him on the occasion of his visit to Windsor, he finally concealed his delinquency from the keen nostrils of a chamberlain by lying flat on his back with his head well within the fireless fireplace and so smoking his cigar.

But the Queen's eldest son's ideas were vastly different from his mother's. When he was Prince of Wales he introduced the custom for the men of smoking after dinner.

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